

Arizona Copper Company, Office (Greenlee County Alternative School)  
Clifton Townsite  
Coronado Boulevard  
Clifton  
Greenlee County  
Arizona

HABS  
ARIZ  
6-CLIFT,  
9C -

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### ARIZONA COPPER COMPANY, OFFICE (Greenlee County Alternative School)

HABS No. AZ-174-C

HABS  
ARIZ  
6-CLIFT,  
9C-

#### Location:

Clifton Townsite, Coronado Boulevard, Clifton, Greenlee County, Arizona

#### Significance:

Associated with the Arizona Copper Company and with the development of Clifton. The building is also an outstanding example of commercial architecture in Clifton, influenced by the Renaissance Revival style.

#### Description:

This two-story commercial building is sited at the base of a cliff within the canyon of the San Francisco River. Coronado Boulevard (Arizona Highway 666), Clifton's main thoroughfare, borders the east property line. The building's plan originally was that of an elongated rectangle with one front projection on each end. In 1910 a wing was added, of identical construction to the original, terminating in another front projection, which gave the building its present appearance with three symmetrically placed projections. The exterior materials include brick walls with sandstone quoins, window heads and sills, and belt courses; and asphalt shingle roofing. The roof is a low-pitched hip with gable dormers. The eaves are supported with decorative knee-braced brackets. All of the original windows have been replaced with fixed glazing. Several of the windows have been boarded up or infilled. The original wood entry doors have been replaced with aluminum storefront units. A modern addition was made to the north side of the building.

#### History:

The northern portion of this building was constructed in 1904 by the Arizona Copper Company for its general offices. The southern portion of the building was added in 1910 to house the offices of the Arizona and New Mexico Railway, an A.C. Co. subsidiary. The A.C. Co. announced in February of 1904 that it would construct a new office building, stating that it would be "a two-story ornament for the town." The Company broke ground during the first week of April in 1904, and soon began the work of laying the foundation. A.C. Co. construction superintendent Emil Schumann designed the building and directed the construction effort. On Monday, June 5, 1904, the Company held an elaborate cornerstone ceremony for the building. A.C. President and General Manager James Colquhoun wielded the trowel and laid the stone. Officials placed copies of newspapers and a short history of the A.C. Co. behind the stone.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the ceremony for the north half of the building, the A.C. Co. added the south wing with little fanfare in 1910. Construction started in January with most of the brick work being completed by February. The south wing was constructed to match the north half of the building exactly. The new space was occupied by the Arizona and New Mexico Railway as its offices. A contemporary observer noted that the building represented a work of "modern architecture."

Windows in the building had been arranged to let ample natural light into the offices.<sup>2</sup>

In 1921, after Phelps Dodge purchased the holdings of the A.C. Co., it sold the railroad division to the El Paso and Southwestern system. After January 1, 1922, the Arizona and New Mexico Railway became the El Paso and Southwestern. This left little need for offices in Clifton. In February, the Gila Valley Bank and Trust Co. announced that it would move its banking operations into the offices formerly occupied by the A&NM. After April 1, the south half of the building housed the bank, while Phelps Dodge continued to use offices in the north half. In June of 1922, the Gila Valley Bank and Trust Co. merged with Valley Bank of Phoenix and thereafter was known as Valley Bank. Valley Bank operated in the building continuously until December of 1985, when it closed the branch after a landslide dumped debris onto the building. In recent years the building has housed the offices of the Copper Era newspaper and the Greenlee County Alternative School.<sup>3</sup>

**Sources (endnotes):**

1. Copper Era February 25, 1904 (l, 3: 1); April 9, 1904 (l, 3: 1); April 21, 1904 (l, 3:1); June 9, 1904 (l, 3: 1). In his 1924 memoir, Colquhoun called Schumann an "incomparable millwright," James Colquhoun The History of the Clifton-Morenci Mining District (London: John Murray, 1924), p. 57.
2. Copper Era February 10, 1910 (l, 3: 1); March 31, 1910 (l, 3: 2); April 7, (l, 3: 4).
3. Copper Era December 30, 1921 (l, 1: 6); February 24, 1922 (l, 4: 1); June 23, 1922 (l, 1: 1); Arizona Republic (Phoenix) December 11, 1985.

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